

partisan takeover so Washington Democrats can appoint themselves the board of elections for every county and State.

The longer these fake hysterics keep up, the more Americans will keep wondering just why Democrats are this desperate—this desperate to seize control over election laws and why Democrats are this panicked by the prospect of voter integrity measures that are simple, that are fair, and that are popular with the American people.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

MR. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TEXAS

MR. THUNE. Mr. President, the Republican leader was here a few moments ago discussing an issue which I think has gotten a lot of play here lately, and that is this attempt by Democrat members of the Texas Legislature to come to Washington, DC, to protest legislation that is being moved through the legislature in the State of Texas. In fact, this is the cover of one of yesterday's newspapers—or I should say today's newspapers.

It has a photo there of all the Democrat legislators from Texas meeting with the Democrat leadership here in the U.S. Senate. Allegedly, they are here, playing hooky from their jobs in Texas, having flown in, I am told, on private jets—so much for doing something about the climate—to protest the fact that in Texas their voices are not being heard and not being given input into the legislative process there.

I point that out simply because it is really incredibly ironic. I mean, it is rich with irony. Sometimes, around here, you just say you can't make this stuff up. They are here in Washington, DC, away from Texas, which is where their jobs are, to protest the fact that their views and voice are not being heard in Texas and that the majority in Texas is running roughshod over the minority and their rights.

The same Democrats, I would add, here in Washington, DC, are trying to get rid of the legislative filibuster in the U.S. Senate, the very mechanism that historically has protected the rights of the minority and given them a voice in the legislative process, the very thing that has been used historically in a way that ensures that the Senate has to come together behind big solutions, collaborate, find that common ground, find that compromise. The Democrats here in Washington and these Democrats from Texas are all in favor of getting rid of the legislative filibuster.

Think about that. It is really pretty remarkable that they would come up here to protest what is happening in

Texas at a time when they support getting rid of the very protections that give the minority here in the U.S. Senate a voice in that legislative process.

And the other really remarkable irony about this is the issue that they are here to speak in support of S. 1, the bill that would federalize, that would nationalize elections in this country and take power away from States when it comes to regulating and administering elections, a power that has been held by States going back to the Founders.

And so they came here basically to say you need to pass H.R. 1. Well, again, what is H.R. 1? H.R. 1 is this massive Federal takeover of elections in this country, and it is also the test case for why we have got to get rid of the legislative filibuster.

I would be willing to bet that the Democrat leader at some point in the next couple of weeks is going to call up S. 1 again. We voted on it once already, but he is going to call it up again because he thinks it is good politics, and, plus, he wants to pressure his Members to do away with the legislative filibuster in order to pass S. 1 with 51 votes.

So, again, the irony of all of this, honestly, is some stuff you just flat can't make up. But I would reiterate what I have said before about S. 1: It is a solution in search of a problem. We have States around this country who are, in some cases moving to put in place election integrity measures, measures that will ensure that every vote counts and that everybody has an opportunity to vote but that people don't have an opportunity to cheat.

That is all it is about. It is about election integrity. And most of the measures that are being adopted in States around this country are simply that—nothing more, nothing less—and, again, historically consistent with the way that our election process has been governed in this country, and that is to allow States to make those to do things in a decentralized way, to not consolidate power in Washington, DC, but rather to distribute that power and make it that much harder to hack into it.

I mean, you think about it, you have 50 election systems in this country. It was what the Founders intended. They wanted to distribute power. They wanted to have a decentralized system, not one that was driven and controlled by a bureaucracy here in Washington, DC. I think that is consistent with what the American people believe ought to happen and the cases it should be when it comes to elections in this country.

So it really is interesting to see these Democrat legislators from Texas coming to Washington, coming all the way up here—again, playing hooky from their jobs in Texas—to protest a piece of legislation that is being used by the Democrat leadership to try and get rid of the legislative filibuster, the very mechanism that protects the rights and the voice of the minority in the

U.S. Senate. It has, literally, since our country's founding.

AGRICULTURE

MR. PRESIDENT, last week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that, going forward, agriculture producers will be able to hay or graze cover crops on prevented plant acres at any time, without a reduction in their prevented planting payments.

This is good news for farmers around the country but particularly for farmers in more northern States like South Dakota, who were left at a significant disadvantage by the previous haying and grazing date. I have been working on this issue since 2019, when the effects of a tough winter, rainfall, and flooding kept many South Dakota farmers from their usual planting.

As a result, many farmers were looking to sow quick cover growing crops on the acres they were unable to plant with their usual crops. But they faced a problem. At the time, the Department of Agriculture would not allow farmers to harvest or graze these cover crops until November 1 each year. Farmers who hayed or grazed before this date faced a reduction in their prevented planting payments, which are crop insurance payments to help them cover their income loss when fields can't be planted due to flooding or other issues.

Now, November 1 was a generally pretty reasonable date for farmers in southern States. But in northern States, like South Dakota, November 1 was often too late for harvesting, thanks to the risk of snow and other late fall or early winter storms. It was also too late to maximize the use of cover crops for pasture, since the ground could freeze before cover crops were fully grazed.

So I and other Members of Congress successfully lobbied the Department of Agriculture to move up the hay and grazing date for 2019. But that was a short-term fix, I should say, for a frequent problem. So in March of 2020, I introduced, legislation, along with Senator STABENOW, to permanently remove the November 1 haying and grazing date. And I continued to lobby USDA on this issue.

I am very pleased that the Department of Agriculture has listened to farmers and the Members who represent them and permanently eliminated the November 1 date. Cover crops are a win-win situation for farmers and for the environment. They prevent soil erosion, which can pollute streams and rivers and worsen flooding. They improve soil health, which improves future crop yields and benefits the environment. And they reduce feed shortages for ag producers by providing another source of feed for their livestock.

Last week's decision by the Department of Agriculture will reduce a barrier to cover crop adaptation and ensure that farmers throughout the United States are able to reap the benefits of sowing these crops.

USDA's decision is a big victory—a big victory—for South Dakota farmers

and farmers in other northern States. But, unfortunately, it doesn't solve the challenges agriculture producers in my State are facing this summer. Right now, almost every acre of land in South Dakota is experiencing drought conditions. A huge portion of the State is facing a severe drought. And some areas of the State have been classified as being in extreme drought. And ag producers in other States are facing similar conditions.

Hay is in short supply. Without adequate forage, some cattle producers are being forced to cut down their herds, which is devastating for producers who have spent years building their herds. Emergency haying and grazing of Conservation Reserve Program acres can help alleviate forage shortages for livestock producers during drought years.

South Dakota has nearly 1.4 million acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program—at least at one time that was the number. It is not that high anymore. I am a longtime champion of this program, which supports both the production, agriculture, and hunting industries in South Dakota.

The Conservation Reserve Program provides critical habitat for pheasants and other wildlife, which contributes significantly to our State's economy. Haying and grazing CRP acres can also provide a lifeline for South Dakota ag producers during droughts like the one that our State is currently facing.

Last month, I sent a letter to USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack urging him to release additional Conservation Reserve Program acres to help South Dakota producers, many of whom are in desperate need. And while I am pleased USDA is currently allowing emergency grazing in many counties, emergency CRP haying is not allowed until after the primary nesting season ends on August 1, which is too late in a drought year.

Agriculture is a tough business, and our producers have had to endure a tremendous amount over the past few years from tough weather conditions, to the COVID pandemic. Cattle producers are also dealing with market volatility that has recently provided record-high profit margins for meatpackers, while producers struggle to stay in business.

I will continue pressing the administration and working with my colleagues to hold the big four meatpackers accountable to the producers and consumers who depend on them. The Department of Agriculture should do everything it can to help farmers and ranchers weather this drought. And I will keep doing everything I can to get relief to producers in my State and around the country.

I am grateful for the Department of Agriculture's decision on haying and grazing on prevented planting acres. And I will keep working to ensure that CRP and all USDA programs have the flexibility necessary to meet the needs of producers while also making sure we balance the wildlife and conservation needs of our State.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FENTANYL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the countdown is on. Today marks the beginning of 100 days until the critical and lifesaving authority placing fentanyl-related substances in schedule I expires. In 100 days that expires.

Congress has extended this authority multiple times, most recently in May. However, when choosing how long to extend this authority, Congress shortchanged itself by providing only 5 months to contemplate how to permanently control fentanyl analogs. I pushed for a longer extension, even spearheading bipartisan legislation that would have extended this authority into the next year, but my colleagues on the other side of the aisle insisted that 5 months was sufficient to work with the administration to find a permanent solution scheduling fentanyl-related substances.

I had skepticism about this when the 5-month extension passed in May, and I have even more skepticism now. That is because we are only 100 days away from losing this essential authority and the administration still has not indicated how it intends to solve this problem. So Congress is operating in the dark.

The administration says that a legislative proposal will be sent to Congress as early as next month. But this proposal won't be a done deal once it arrives on Capitol Hill because, you know, Presidents propose, Congress disposes.

If it doesn't include measures to protect vulnerable communities, to prevent more drug overdose victims, and proactively deter and punish drug traffickers, then it won't be enough to solve the problems of a drug—fentanyl—killing several hundred thousand people.

I have been beating the drum on scheduling fentanyl analogs for a long period of time because it is a fight worth having. We simply can't afford to let these deadly substances go unscheduled.

What happens if we don't schedule fentanyl analogs in the next 100 days? Well, it is pretty obvious. Opioid-related deaths fueled by fentanyl analogs increased by 35 percent in my State of Iowa. What about the other 49 States? But 35 percent in Iowa last year. That happens to be in line with nationwide trends. So deaths will continue to rise if we don't buckle down and get onto this issue of scheduling fentanyl schedule I on a permanent basis.

Also, according to the Customs and Border Patrol, so far this year, enough

fentanyl and its analogs have been seized to kill the entire population of the United States not once, but 10 times over.

Some may view drug crimes as victimless. You need to tell that to the hundreds of thousands of families who have lost their brother, sister, parent, or child to fentanyl.

Tell that to Rob and Deb Courtney, the parents of Chad Courtney from North Liberty, IA. Chad died 5 years ago because of fentanyl. He used painkillers and then turned to abusing heroin. Rod and Deb tried to help their son through rehab and treatment. Then one day they received the call that they had been dreading. Their son died because a drug dealer laced heroin with a deadly fentanyl substance. Rod said that one of the last memories he has of his son was picking him up from treatment and Chad stating, "I just want to make a difference."

We owe it to Chad and the other 36,359 victims of fentanyl-related overdose deaths to make a difference now, and that means passing legislation that schedules fentanyl and its analogs permanently.

Congress can ensure that we put people over profits and communities over cartels by permanently scheduling fentanyl-related substances. I don't doubt that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle want to protect their constituents. Nobody wants more overdose deaths in their home States. So let's work together to put this issue to rest at last.

Starting today, the countdown is on. As I said in the beginning, 100 more days. I hope the administration and my Senate colleagues are ready to get to work on permanently scheduling fentanyl-related substances. I know that I am ready.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

NOMINATIONS OF TRACY STONE-MANNING AND DAVID CHIPMAN

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss two troubling nominations by President Biden for positions that have very real impacts on my State of Wyoming and the people who live there.

One of the simplest yet truest rules of governance is that personnel is policy. We have seen this rule play out over and over under President Biden.

During last year's election, the media created a narrative that a Biden Presidency would unite the country with bipartisanship. That has not happened. Many of the President's policies have been extreme appeals to the far left and decidedly hostile to our way of life in Wyoming and the West.

I believe much of this can be traced to the people with whom he has surrounded himself and to those he has appointed. That is why I am so concerned about two of the President's nominees that the Senate is considering.

First, there is Tracy Stone-Manning, President Biden's nominee to serve as